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After School Aviation Program To Be Field-Tested In Weatherford



Provided by WPS

Four 6th Grade students travelled to the State Capitol on Thursday, January 11 to represent the Weatherford Public School District. There, they celebrated the kick off of Bessie Coleman's All-Star Aviation Program in Oklahoma.

Weatherford was one of just three districts in the state to be participating in this program for the Spring 2024 semester.

Katelyn Wade
ODAA Marketing Coordinator

The Oklahoma Department of Aerospace and Aeronautics

Executive Director, Grayson Ardies, and Senator Adam Pugh, the Chair of the 59th Legislative AERO Caucus and Senate Education Committee, announced a partnership with the Bessie Coleman Aviation All-Stars Program, and Gigi Coleman Brooms, President of the Chicago-based aviation education 501 (c)3.

At its December 2023 meeting, the Commission approved a partnership with the Bessie Coleman Aviation All-Star Program to implement an after-school aviation program for 6th and 7th-grade students enrolled in the Weatherford Public Schools, Pryor Public Schools, and Springdale Elementary of the Tulsa Public Schools. The first of its kind in Oklahoma, students enrolled in the aeronautical program will learn about aerospace careers and will participate in hands-on aviation projects that have been designed to create interest in aerospace and aeronautics while celebrating the heritage of Bessie Coleman.

"Aerospace is Oklahoma's fastest growing industry, and it's important we provide as many educational opportunities as possible, so our students can learn about the incredible career opportunities available in the various aviation fields right here in our state.

The earlier young people are exposed to the world of aeronautics, the more likely they are to take STEM-related classes and gain the tools and knowledge needed to successfully pursue a career in this exciting industry," Pugh said. "As a former aviator, I'm thrilled this unique after-school aviation program will now be offered in Oklahoma and look forward to hearing how it opens students' minds to the endless world of possibilities in the aerospace industry."

During the first week, students will be introduced digitally to Gigi Coleman, Bessie Coleman's great-niece, an actor-historian of the Bessie Coleman aviation story, where she will reenact her great aunt's early life telling the story of how she became America's first black, female pilot in 1921.

During the following weeks, students will meet pilot professionals, build airplanes, interact with military aviation professionals, and learn about commercial flight, space travel, advanced air mobility, and drone operations. During the after-school program, Oklahoma educators will follow a curriculum developed by the Bessie Coleman Aviation All-Star Program and the Oklahoma Department of Aerospace and Aeronautics.

"We have enjoyed an amazing relationship with the Bessie Coleman Aviation All-Stars Program. Gigi accepted the 2022 Oklahoma Women in Aviation and Aerospace Day Woman of the Year award, and our partnership has created this unique aero-education opportunity that will benefit Oklahoma students in communities across the state," said Ardies.

April 30, 2026, marks the 100th anniversary of Bessie Coleman's death and in keeping her legacy alive, their goal is to expand aviation programs throughout the United States, reaching as many students as possible. The curriculum is designed to promote STEM (science, technology engineering, and math), teach the theory of flight (aeronautics) and introduce various careers, pioneers and inventors in aviation. They are a national 501(c)(3) non-profit organization where their work is primarily funded by grants and individual donations.

"Aunt Bessie would be proud of the work we are doing in her honor and legacy. Speaking at schools and churches, she encouraged African Americans' interest in aviation. She also raised money to found a school to train black aviators. One hundred years later, we are continuing her mission and we are excited to bring the state of Oklahoma into our aeronautical family," said Coleman-Brooms.



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Grace Holden

Grace (Kirk) Holden was born on April 18, 1941 to David and Thelma (Hanson) Kirk in Wellington, Kansas and passed away on Friday, January 12, 2024 at the OU Medical Center in Edmond.



Grace was raised and attended school in Pond Creek. She accepted Christ when she was 8 years old. She married Homer H. Holden Jr. on July 21, 1957 and they made their home in Wichita, Kansas for a couple of years. They later moved to Medford and raised their family. She became a dental assistant with numerous certifications and was an active member of the Oklahoma Dental Assistant Association. Grace was passionate about her career. She taught American Red Cross CPR courses, was a clinic coordinator, and a dental scrub tech at OU Health Science. She enjoyed sponsoring teenagers at Falls Creek Camp, cooking, traveling, OU football, family get togethers, cake decorating, and was famous for her toffee.

Grace is survived by her daughter, Sherrie and Beck Johnson, of Weatherford, OK; son, Brent Holden, of Enid, OK; brother, David Kirk, of Pond Creek, OK; Five grandchildren, Jonelle Holden, Long Beach, CA, Matt Johnson, Weatherford, OK, Clayton Johnson, Ada, OK, Justin Johnson, Lawton, OK, and Annastaisia Hambright, AL, and ten great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Homer; son, Steven; and sister, Daleen.

Ralph Roll

Ralph Watts Roll, 89, was born on December 31, 1934, to William R Roll and Claire E (Smith) Roll of Arapaho, OK and passing away Saturday, January 6, 2024, in his Clinton home.



Ralph was raised on the family farm 7 miles NW of Arapaho, OK. His mother died before he turned 3 years old. Bill was both a mother, father, and breadwinner for his family. Frances, as the oldest child, had a lot of responsibility for her two younger siblings. As a result, Ralph gave her the name "Boss."

The Kids had a lot of unsupervised time and loved to remember the things they got by with. Dinner table talk time in later years resulted in lots of memories recalled with hilarious laughter. He attended Arapaho schools and enlisted in the U.S. Air Force on July 7, 1954, and served a 2-year stint. He was honorably discharged in 1956 after his father was severely burned in a farm accident and Ralph was needed at home.

He married Lettie J. Brown on September 22, 1957. They farmed until 1992. He was also a rural mail carrier for 15 years, retiring in 1997. After retirement, they enjoyed several years of traveling and spending time on their property in South Fork, Colorado. They also worked as camp managers for National Forest Campgrounds.

Ralph loved anything mechanical and was able to fix anything he set his mind to, especially if he had some wire, duct tape and his pliers. When he was 12, he built a motorized go-cart using a Maytag washing machine motor to propel his little cart. It went downhill and, on the level, just fine, but had to be pushed uphill.

He was an active and faithful member of the Cornerstone Church of God, serving on several boards, as Church treasurer and wherever needed. He was a member of the Rural Letter Carriers, American Legion, and was on the Arapaho School Board for 15 years.

He had the privilege of presenting all three of his children with their diplomas. Ralph was proud of serving his country and flew a flag in front of every home he owned. He was a surviving atomic veteran and would often say he would do it again if his country needed him.

He was preceded in death by his mother Claire, when he was 2 ½ years old, his father and stepmom Ruby (Riber) Roll, his sister Frances Roll.

He is survived by his wife of 66 years, Lettie Roll. Two daughters, Melanie, and husband Steve Black, Melissa, and husband John Moss, one son Mark, and wife Melissa Roll, two sisters, Ardeth Harper and Betty Madison, and numerous nieces and nephews.

He is also survived by 8 grandchildren, Jared, and wife Beth Black, Travis, and wife Sarah Black, Taylor Black, Jessica McClung, Amanda, and husband Nathan McPherson, Joshua, and wife Elly Roll, Cherokee Moss, John Michael Moss II. He also has 13 great grandchildren which were his pride and joy.

Ralph will be remembered as a man who loved his God, his wife and family, and loved his country.

Nathan Brockelman

Born in Altus, OK, to Nathan Sr. and Nylene, Nathan and his sister Penny lived a childhood shaped by his father's Air Force service, moving from base to base across the country.



Nathan graduated from Bellevue High School in Bellevue, Nebraska in 1972. After his father's retirement, the family settled in Weatherford, Oklahoma. Nathan attended classes at Southwestern Oklahoma State University while balancing a part-time job at the 3M plant. It was there he met Norva, who soon became his wife. He soon adopted her children, Casey and Bridgett, as his own, and their family later grew with the addition of their son, Eric

Driven by a desire to help others, Nathan earned his Bachelor's of Science in Psychology and dedicated 40 remarkable years to the field. From 1981 until his passing, he served at New Horizons Mental Health (later Rose Rock Behavioral Health Services), leaving a lasting impact on countless individuals.

Beyond his professional calling, Nathan was a dedicated member of the Masons and a passionate advocate for children through his involvement with the Weatherford chapter of BACA (Bikers Against Child Abuse).

On January 3, 2024, surrounded by his loving family, Nathan passed away peacefully. He is preceded in death by his grandparents and beloved granddaughter, Kiersten. He leaves behind a legacy of kindness and service, cherished by his wife, Norva, children Casey, Bridgett, and Eric, grandchildren Brayden, Finn, Damen, Royce, and Phoebe, and great-grandchildren Graeson and Credence.

Kenneth Weightman

Kenneth Wayne Weightman was born July 27, 1942, to Ervin Weightman and Dollie Gertrude (Lowry) Weightman in Redondo Beach, CA and passed away Sunday, January 7, 2024, in his Clinton resident.



Kenneth was raised in Gould, OK where he graduated from high school in 1960. He was active in sports and excelled in basketball. He married Sylvia Jean Webb on June 23, 1961, at his home in Gould, OK. They soon moved to Cypress, CA where he became a baker. He made his way back to Oklahoma in 1969 and in 1987 he settled in Clinton. He was a life insurance salesman for numerous companies and retired after 30 years.

He was a member of the Baptist Church, along with his wife he spent numerous hours bird watching. He loved to play pool, watch sports and in his earlier years he enjoyed hunting and fishing.

He is preceded in death by his parents, daughter, Kelly Mendez, brother, Herman Weightman, sister, Lola Belle Wilson and son in law, Brad Shindler, a granddaughter in law, Brooke Caswell.

He is survived by his wife Sylvia, of the home, two daughters, Kathy Shindler, Arapaho, OK and Dana Caswell and husband, Bobby, Cordell, OK, sister, Dollie Bailey, New Castle, OK; seven grandchildren, Tosha Christian and husband, Parker, Brandon Caswell, Joshua Caswell, Kendra Tillman and husband, Landon, Klinton Seddon and wife, Krista, Kelby Mendez and Kelsey Mendez; and 11 great-grandchildren and numerous other family.

Everleigh Thomas

Everleigh Rose'Ann Thomas was born January 4, 2024, in the Yukon Integris Hospital in Yukon and passed away Wednesday, January 10, 2024, in the Integris Baptist Hospital in OKC.



She was the third child of Matthew and Amanda Thomas and baby sister to Oliver, and Adaline, of the home. She is the granddaughter of Sally and Jimmy James, Clinton; Amy Smith, Yukon; Carmen Arriaga; and Regina Seabolt, all of Clinton; great-grandmother Bernice Haines, Lawton; great-grandfather Mike Smith, Austin; great-grandmother Maria Badillo; and great-grandfather, Carmen Arriaga, both of Clinton.

She was preceded in death by granddad, Mark Thomas, Great grandparents, Virgil and Laverne Thomas, Gertrude Steffes, Leo Steffes, great-great grandparents, Henry and Evelyn Haines

Beverly Rigsby

Beverly Jean Rigsby was born on August 31, 1929, in South Gate, San Francisco, to Carrie and Sylvester Terry and passed away on January 14, 2024, after struggling with illness, at the age of 94 years, 4 months and 14 days.



She certainly went through countless historical times and events during her ninety-four years on this earth, and each filled her with knowledge and life experiences that attributed to her strength, vast and interesting stories. From watching the ships leave the Bay Area of San Francisco at the beginning of WWII, the Great Depression, survival of massive earthquakes, drought, tornados, and the recent pandemic, she lived a turbulent and tough life, but she always recalled the memories as stamina builders and looked upon each as a challenge they overcame.

Beverly, most lovingly remembered as Mom, Grandma and Aunt to many valued her family and friends. She lived and loved her time with family and extended family more than life itself. Nothing made her happier than time spent with everyone loudly circled around, playing cards, eating delicious food, and tons of laughter. You were never safe from her cunning and talented card playing ways.

It did not matter if she had ever personally met you, if you were a friend of the family, you became her friend and family member. She genuinely loved each of those in her life. She also had a huge passion for Nascar racing and during the season you would often hear her yelling at the television and clapping her hands if her favorite driver had taken the lead or booing if they had issues. She was strong willed and stubborn at times, but she had an enormous heart and wonderful sense of humor that will be dearly missed.

Beverly was preceded in death by her devoted husband of thirty-seven years, Willis Eugene (Gene) Rigsby in 1988. She missed and mourned for him daily. Her Mother and Pop Carrie and Sylvester Terry, Brothers Al, and J.D. (Katherine) Terry, Sisters Rosemary (John) and Olive June (Jack).

Beverly is survived by Daughter Karen Rigsby-Ferree, Daughter and Son-In-Law Pam and David McBroome, Granddaughter Brittany McBroome, Granddaughter and Husband Trista and Keith Taylor, and her treasured Great Grandson Jett. She also leaves behind a multitude of nieces and nephews, who she loved dearly and were always there for her.

Kathryn Callan

Kathryn Denise Callan was born August 6, 1957, to Royce Cleveland Wetherbee and Buelah Rexine (Holderby) Wetherbee at Good Samaritan Hospital in Phoenix, AZ and passed away at her home in Clinton, OK on January 12, 2024.



Kathryn spent her first 13 years in Avondale, AZ and then the family moved to Tucson, AZ where she attended Amphitheater High School. Kathryn loved to help and serve others and this passion led her to pursue many career fields to include Cosmetology, Licensed Practical Nursing, EMT/Paramedic, and Respiratory Therapy. She served 21 years with the Pima County Sheriff's Department as a 911 Dispatcher, Training Coordinator, Peer Support, and retired in 2013 from her role as a Communications Training Coordinator/Manager.

Kathryn married Robert Callan on October 15, 1988, in Tucson, AZ. They moved to Clinton in 2022.

Kathryn loved Jesus and attended New Beginnings Assembly of God Church in Cordell. She enjoyed scrapbooking, gardening, cooking, shooting, hunting, fishing, travelling, singing, music, and spending time with her husband Robert.

Kathryn loved animals and rescued many dogs in her lifetime. She was known by all for her sense of humor and filled our lives with laughter.

She was preceded in death by her father, Royce Wetherbee, and granddaughter, Rebecca Sargent.

She is survived by her husband Robert Callan, her children, Kristen (Michael) Sirmmon, Dill City, OK, Teasha (Kenneth) Houston, Sierra Vista, AZ, Gina (Danny, Jr.) Sargent, Chandler, AZ, Laurie Walsh, Tucson, AZ, Mitzi Tribolet, Tucson, AZ, Michael (Tabitha) Callan, Alvarado, TX.

She is also survived by 15 grandchildren and two great grandchildren, mother Rexine Wetherbee, Marana, AZ, siblings Sheryl (Phillip) Wenstrand, Green Valley, AZ, David (Sandra) Wetherbee, Marana, AZ, Duane (Sheila) Wetherbee, Marana, AZ, Janet (Robert) McLeod, Great Falls, MT, Diane (Phillip) Fabjancin, Marana, AZ, a host of nieces and nephews, special cousin, Debra Harbin, Abilene, TX, special friends, Greg Owens, Salt Lake City, UT and Sandi Babcock, Ardmore, OK and many more family and close friends.

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A Tribute to Willie Murray (1908 - 1963)



Bob Burke
Constitutional Lawyer & Author

Willie Emerson Murray was born in Weatherford in 1908. Early in life, she began piano lessons and progressed to the title of concert pianist. With blazing red hair that “sparkled in the sun,” she was praised for her intelligence and charm.

Willie was the first woman to run for Governor of Oklahoma. As the wife of Governor Johnston Murray, she opened the Governor’s Mansion to visitors for the first time.

Their marriage ended in one of the bitterest and most public divorces in state history. She died at age 54 of cancer. She always made her hometown of Weatherford proud.

Willie married Johnston Murray, the son of Governor and Oklahoma Constitutional Convention Chairman William H. “Alfalfa Bill” Murray in 1933. The younger Murray was elected Governor in 1950 by only 1,000 votes. Some credited Willie’s charm and public speaking ability to be the difference in the election. Johnston was quiet and was an introvert.

To the public, Johnston and Willie were a perfect partnership. But behind the scenes, the marriage soured. As First Lady, Willie opened the Governor’s Mansion to visitors each week. As many as 3,000 people would wait in long lines to see the Mansion. At the time, the state constitution prohibited a Governor from serving more than one term.

Willie filed as one of 16 Democratic gubernatorial contenders in 1954. She was the first candidate in the state to campaign in a helicopter. Willie ran 7th in the primary field of 16. Raymond Gary of Madill was elected Governor that year.

After the Murrays left the mansion, Johnston filed for divorce. Willie fought the divorce and publicly named the lady with whom she accused her husband of having an illicit affair. State newspapers covered the trial and reported that Willie wanted to reconcile, but Johnston did not. After a trial with bitter accusations from both parties, which were front-page news in newspapers, Willie was granted a divorce in 1956. She received the family home and a sizeable amount of cash. She returned to Weatherford to be near family. She taught girls’ Sunday school and conducted the children’s choir. Penniless, Johnston remarried and moved to Fort Worth where he was a cab driver.

Willie died of cancer at age 54 in 1963. At her memorial service at Crown Heights Methodist Church in Oklahoma City, Rev. Wayne Coffin said, “Perhaps no other woman has ever influenced the state of Oklahoma as much as she was able to do.” Willie is buried in her hometown of Weatherford.

After Willie’s death, some noted her tremendous courage during a long fight with cancer and her loyal service of love and devotion to the state she so deeply revered.

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HIGHER GROUND

How to Catch a Monkey



The Apostle Paul wrote letters to the churches he started. The church at Colosse was not directly planted by Paul but by one of his followers. It was likely started by Epaphras who was converted in another one of Paul’s travels.

Epaphras visited Paul in prison to share some concerns about doctrinal issues that were threatening the young church. In his first two chapters Paul addresses these issues which are pertinent even to us today. But in Chapters 3 and 4, he tells them about how they are to live out their faith in a way that would draw people from the pagan society because of its stark contrast to the darkness of the society of that day.

But the teachings are still relevant today. Human nature has not changed that much since the 2000 plus

years in which the letter was written. Today, let us look at two verses that deal with the conduct and attitudes we struggle with in relationships today.

Col. 3:12,13 “And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; forgive as the Lord forgave you.”

As we begin this new year, it would do us well to meditate on these verses. I find myself so lacking in most of these areas. We are to strive for growth in becoming like Christ. The contrast between these character traits and the rhetoric and actions that which we see and hear every day, even among Christians is sad. We can’t change other people but we can start with ourselves; first by repenting and asking God to reveal those areas in which we fall short. Conviction of sin should not make you sad or left with a feeling of guilt. We should rejoice that the Spirit has revealed to us those areas in which we fall short. Now we can seek God’s guidance and power to deal with those areas that have weakened our witness. In Hebrews 12:1 the writer says we are to “...throw off everything that hinders...” so we can run with patience the race that is set before us.”

It is hard for us to imagine how significant these virtues were in the Roman world. There was no room for mercy or compassion in the society of that day. The sickly or maimed were cast out. There was no feeling for the simple-minded or mentally sick. There was no provision for old people. Barclay in his commentary on Colossians says, “Christianity brought mercy into the world. It is not too much to say that everything that has been done for the aged, the sick, the weak in body and in mind, the animal, the child, the woman has been done under the inspiration of Christianity.”

How do we grow in fullness of these virtues? It is not found in human effort, although discipline or effort is involved. Only the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit can complete the project. We must humbly confess to Father- God our weakness in a particular area. Ask him to provide circumstance that he can use to grow you in this area. Plead for his Spirit to create a will or desire in your heart to seek that virtue to become a natural part of your lifestyle. It is surely a marathon, not a sprint. As you seek the Higher Ground of Obedience and Submission, the way becomes clearer and the joy more real even with the trials that will come.

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Russell-Murray Hospice Offering Nursing Care for Oklahomans

Russell-Murray Hospice Offering Nursing Care for Western Oklahomans. A terminal diagnosis is one of the hardest things to face. It's commonly understood that each moment is precious but when you're told explicitly that your finite amount of time is quickly approaching, the news can be overwhelming. After receiving a diagnosis like that, families & patients may ask: What's the next step? What should I do? What's the point? In the wake of shattering news, a little bit of help can go a long way. Russell-Murray Hospice, Inc. is a nonprofit organization that provides in home care to patients that have a terminal diagnosis of 6 months or less. Following the diagnosis, families who reach out following a referral will be able to meet with a supervisor to discuss their needs.

After, the team goes through the medical records with the doctors and determines the best treatment paths and equipment they'll need. Then, the Russell-Murray team will get the necessary equipment installed and setup in the patients home, even before they're discharged from the hospital. The goal is to ensure the families can focus on each other and the time they have. All other cares & worries can be handled (transportation, visits, etc.). Russell-Murray offers in-depth and varied counselor and therapy services per patient need. If new developments come up and additional therapy, like respiratory or physical, is needed, the team comes together to discuss if it can be covered and implemented.

When providing care, the Russell- Murray caregivers can also train the patient's primary caregivers in specific care like wound dressing so they can ensure the comfort of their loved one. Russell-Murray Hospice, Inc. has four locations: El Reno, Weatherford, Kingfisher, and Oklahoma City. They cover a 75-mile radius from El Reno and any office can direct you to the service office for your location. They also offer extensive bereavement services for the family, including explanations and assistance in planning. Russell-Murray's goals are to "Take care of the patient and their family, and to ensure they are able to experience these last stages together." When facing a terminal diagnosis, please remember that you don't have to face it alone. "We want to help. We want to be there. It's never too late."

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There's more to life than just getting by. It's about the people we meet, the experiences we share, and the fondness we feel as we look back at the windy paths our lives took. These life aspects are the fundamental backbone of River Valley Skilled Nursing & Therapy in Clinton, OK. The on-site and experienced staff don't call it a job, they call it a lifestyle.

With 24/7 skilled staff, the care given to the residents at River Valley is unmatched. Care that checks off each component of wellness and health. Every member at River Valley is licensed, certified, and specialized.

From therapy services conducted by occupational and speech language therapists to physician services to dietary services overseen by registered dietitians to nursing services that include focused care for diabetes management, IV Therapy, Respiratory Services, cardiac care, Mobile Lab services, and

more, the sheer work put into surrounding residents with highly sought-after medical professionals is staggering.

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LOCAL AND AREA NEWS



Mike Smith
News Director

Weatherford Rotary Clubs Celebrates Induction of Two New Members

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The Weatherford Rotary Club recently introduced two new members among their ranks. Pictured with them are President Garrett King (left), and Jeff Berrong (right).

Funkhouser graduated from WHS with the Class of 2000. He and his wife are active members of the Weatherford First United Methodist Church.

Dr. John Hayden (pictured, second-from-left) has been a Professor of History at Southwestern Oklahoma State University since 1992.

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Weatherford Rotary Club Recognizes Two Outstanding High School Students



Harold Wright, WW

Delaney Ferguson (pictured, left) and Jeremiah Kagan (right) have received the SWOSU World Languages Scholarship for the Fall 2023 Semester. This scholarship goes towards paying for the students' World Languages minor. The award was bestowed by Associate Professor of Italian and Spanish, Dr. Tugba Sevin.

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FOSS / STRUCTURE FIRE - Fire damaged a home in the 200 block of East First Street in Foss Sunday. Foss Fire Department officials say the home was occupied by local Firefighter Steve Hoelscher, who suffered complications from smoke inhalation as a result of the incident. Authorities say one bedroom was a total loss, with water damage sustained to at least half of the home. Officials say it's believed the fire was electrical. Monetary donations can be made at the Foss Fire Department at 200 North Broadway or at Sovereign Bank in Canute in the care of Steve Hoelscher to help with housing and necessary needs.

CUSTER CO / ILLEGAL DUMPING - Custer County Commissioner Bruce Walker says illegal dumping is a problem. Walker describes sign-stealing and trash dumping as "an epidemic" in Custer County while recounting how county crews discovered another illegal dumping site recently and turned it over to the Sheriff's Department. The site was located on County Road 2340.

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CLINTON / FRANCHISE RENEWAL - Clinton Mayor David Berrong says officials with Oklahoma Natural Gas (ONG) made a presentation last night regarding a franchise renewal. Berrong believes the terms, length, and percentages of the contract will remain unchanged once the vote passes. Berrong says a vote by the citizens of Clinton will soon occur on the franchise renewal.

WOCS / FUNDRAISING - Fundraising is underway for the construction of a new Western Oklahoma Christian School says Spokesperson Heather Spain. Spain says a Stew Dinner Fundraiser will be held on Thursday, February 8. She says the new facility will house grades Pre-K through 6th. Plans have been filed with the city of Weatherford for the construction of the new campus behind crosspoint church.

WEATHERFORD FD / 2023 SVC - Weatherford Fire Chief Mike Karlin says calls for service for the Fire Department were down in 2023. Karlin says grass fire runs for 2022 were around 40 compared to 140 the previous year and over the past several years the department has averaged between 90 and 160 grass fire runs.

BECKHAM CO / HAYS - Beckham County Sheriff Derek Manning says a Carter man is being held without bond on a complaint of first-degree manslaughter in connection with a fatal shooting last week. 37-year-old Clayton Samson Hays is in custody in connection with the shooting death of 42-year-old Colter Jake Vaught of Sayre. Manning says the shooting occurred on a roadway outside an oilfield business on South Merritt Road last Thursday. He says the two men knew each other and reportedly had an ongoing dispute.

WEEKLY SHOUTOUTS!

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Happy Birthday Wishes for Jan. 24 - Hadley Andes, Ercel Tonya, Bryan Buckner, Beth Cozzont, Myka Davis, Marissa Gathers, Dealrey Hertel, Meri Hix, Cindy Kessler, Paula Merchant, Sue Mingus, Marcus Murray, Ray Nesmith, Marcie Rhoades, Meagan Stewart, Carie Strauch, Larry Thomason, Mitch Turney, Carlie Wood; **Jan. 25** - Tressa Hobbs, Cassandra Conway, Stephanie Daniel, Mike Karlin, Derek King, Kennedy Merrill, Karah Moxley, Nataly Newman, Ralph Schreiner, Debbie Waggoner, Wilma Smith; **Jan. 26th** - Amanda Anders, Verla Barber, John Creswell, Kim Davis, Matthew Bird, Mike Ferguson, Don Groth, Heather Hawkins, Jevin Jefferson, Kari Jones, Bill Kern, Autumn Lettkeman, Alex Mack, Rick Oliver, Tyler Vassar, Abby Wright; **Jan. 27th** - Brent Avery, Eddie Bird, Vickie Clonce, Kelly Pease, Josiane Garrison, Noelle Price, Billie Rodriguez, Angie Schmidt, John Smith, Amy Thornburg, Chris Thurman, Cylina Weatherly; **Jan. 28th** - Todd Boyd, Tina Goucher, Stacie Henderson, Johnetta Lindsey, Lara Menke, Collin Shaw, Zainia Moorhead, Pedro Rodriguez, Jenna Sheffield, Jamie Steffenson, Tara Stockton; **Jan. 29th** - Levi Feltman, Corey Fuller, Creelie Hamons, Chelsea Hughes, Farrah Humphreys, Que Jefferson, Krystal Kargis, Jacob Klassen, Donnie Lafever, Rachael Merchant, Rebecca Merchant, Liz O'Neill, Betty Prentice, Bob Smith, Duane Steinly, Kristen Stephenson, D'lese Travis, Clarice Whiteskunk; **Jan. 30th** - Hilda Bent, Mary Foster, Jessica Holt, Pat Reimer, Shona Stermer, Rachel Ura-neck, Val Yoder, George Zatarain.

Rees Berkey, Jacore Williams Earn Latest Bulldogs of the Week

Grant Kopycinski Sports Information Graduate Asst. Rees Berkey and Jacore Williams of SWOSU Basketball have been named the latest Bulldogs of the Week.

The weekly SWOSU student-athlete recognition is brought to you by Wright Media, the home of SWOSU Athletics for both livestream and radio.

Berkey (Hydro, Oklahoma) totaled 20 points off the bench in two games for the Lady Bulldogs last week in just over 30 minutes of floor time.

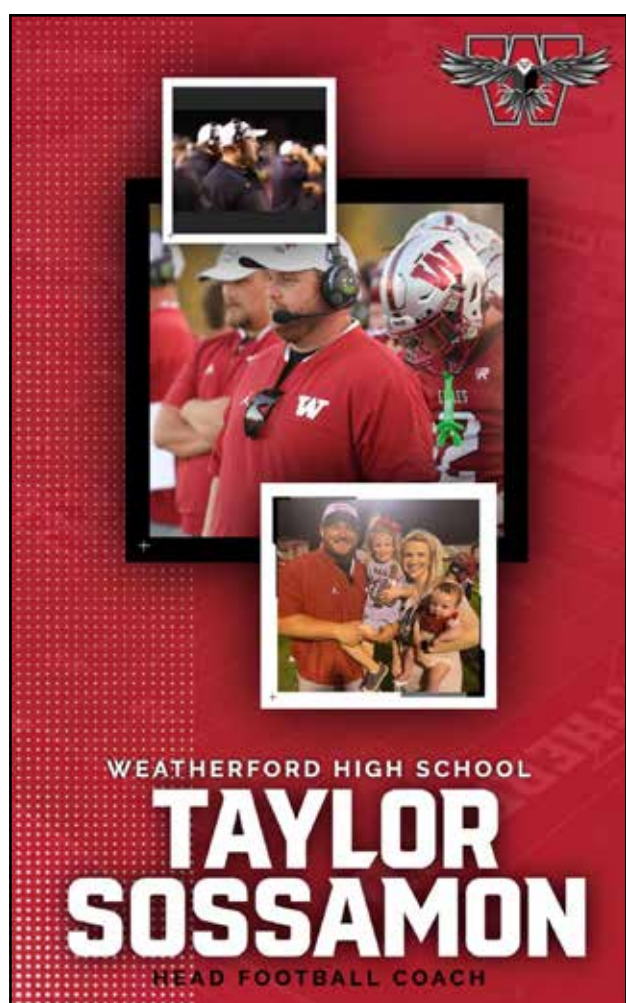
She did so on an efficient 8-for-11 shooting while knocking down 3-of-4 from the three-point line. Berkey's 48% field goal percentage this season leads the team.

Williams (Little Rock, Arkansas) also provided an efficiency lift off the bench for Men's Hoops, scoring a season high 15 points against Harding and another 10 vs Arkansas Tech.

He finished 11-for-16 from the field on the week and has now scored in double figures in four straight games for the Dawgs.



Weatherford High School Welcomes New Football Coach for 2024-24 School Year



Alexander Shook
WW Contributor

On Tuesday, January 16, the Weatherford School Board of Education decided to hire Taylor Sossamon as the 2024-25 Head Football Coach for the district, says Interim Superintendent Richard Brownen.

"He knows our kids—he's developed a lot of them—he has great morals, and he bring great leadership to our school," said Brownen.

Coach Soss, as he is known, has been with Weatherford Public Schools for seven years as a teacher and assistant coach. He was selected as the WPS Teacher of the Year. His wife, Mrs. Sossamon is a second grade teacher with the Weatherford district.

Weatherford Public Schools posted a news release on the subject, praising both teachers in the announcement. "Both are highly respected teachers and we are extremely excited that their family will continue to bless our students and community."

"I just feel really excited to be able to obtain a young man like him, as well as his wife," said Brownen. "They are both excellent teachers, and they've both held Teacher of the Year [for Weatherford] at different times."

Soss will succeed Reagan Roof who resigned to accept the head football coaching position at Kingfisher.



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Sayre Chamber of Commerce Hosting "Queen of Hearts" Raffle

Alexander Shook
WOK Contributor

On January 17, the Sayre Chamber of Commerce Facebook page announced its ongoing "Queen of Hearts" Raffle are officially open to the public.

Every week, the Chamber's Facebook page will post the business in which the games will be hosted. The entry fee is only \$1 to receive a ticket, with no limit on how many tickets can be purchased.

Anyone wishing to play will need to provide the following information: the Full Name of the Ticket Holder; Phone Number to Contact a Winner; and one Unrevealed Card (Numbered 1-54)

The rules are simple; simply pick a card on the board. If your chosen card is an Ace of any suit, you'll net \$25. If you find a Joker, you'll net \$50. And for the one lucky soul who finds the titular Queen of Hearts, you'll win 50% of all donations made towards the pot. The pot currently stands at \$1,200, meaning if you play this week and your ticket is drawn, you could walk away with up to \$600!

The purpose of these games are to raise funds to support the operations and expansion of the Sayre Chamber of Commerce.

For any additional questions, please contact the Sayre Chamber of Commerce by emailing SayreChamberOK@Yahoo.com or calling 580-928-3386. Regular updates are also being posted to the Sayre Chamber of Commerce's Facebook page.



Provided by the Sayre Chamber of Commerce

The Queen of Hearts Board will be moved to a new business in Sayre every week. Behind one of these cards is the Queen of Hearts, which could earn a lucky player up to \$600 if their ticket is drawn before the end of the week.

Canute Girls and Calumet Boys Claim 2024 West Central Titles



Provided

The 2024 West Central Basketball Tournament wrapped up play this past Saturday. On the girls' side of the tournament, the Canute Trojanettes defeated the Lady Bulldogs 39-34. On the boys' side, the Calumet Chieftains defeated the Sentinel Bulldogs 72-63.



Provided

Organizers honored the best players of the tournament. The girls' All-Tournament team included (pictured from left): Madi Mannering of Thomas, Dillyn Coe of Hydro, Taelor Leslee of Sentinel, Rylea Pruitt of Sentinel, Destiny Jackson of Canute, and Tournament MVP Kendall Schuster of Canute. The boys' All-Tournament team included (pictured from left): Jace Pribble of Hydro-Eakly, Jaxon Beck of Canute, Raul Lopez of Sentinel, Brady Wootton of Sentinel, Hunter Arnold of Calumet, and Tournament MVP Dalton Belcher of Calumet.

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A Stout Defensive Propels SWOSU over Tech



Jon Chidester
 Sports Asst. AD

SWOSU Women's Basketball forced 27 turnovers in a 55-48 road victory over Arkansas Tech on Saturday inside Tucker Coliseum.

It's the most turnovers SWOSU has come away with in a conference game since December 4, 2021 when they had that same number against Oklahoma Baptist.

The visiting Bulldogs led by six points entering the fourth quarter against Tech before using an 11-2 run to grab complete control of the game and put all pressure on the Golden Suns who were unable to eliminate the 15-point fourth quarter deficit.

Hailey Grant had a career high 18 points on Thursday night against Harding and one-upped that mark two days later with 19 against Tech. Her layup with 12 seconds remaining in the game allowed the milestone to be achieved.

It wasn't the prettiest offensive game for either side. SWOSU shot 13% to start the game in the opening quarter and had just six points to show for it after the end of one. The sides were tied 6-6 entering quarter two.

In the second, SWOSU knocked down 5-of-8 from the three-point line including two deep balls from Rees Berkey and went on to outscore the Golden Suns by five to lead 25-20 at halftime.

SWOSU shot sub 40% in the third quarter before posting a game best 50% mark in the fourth.

In the game, the Lady Dawgs finished with a 33% shooting mark and 32% (7-22) from beyond the arc. ATU was marginally better at 37% from the field but was just 4-for-14 (30%) from deep. Thanks to tough defense, SWOSU took 14 more shots than the home side after racking up the 27 forced turnovers.

27 turnovers led to 30 points for SWOSU, a key difference maker on the day. The Lady Bulldogs turned it over just 11 times themselves.

SWOSU (9-7, 6-4 GAC) returns home and will prepare to host rival Northwestern (1/25) and Oklahoma Baptist (1/27) next week on Thursday and Saturday. The matchup against the Rangers will conclude the first half of conference play. Currently, SWOSU sits tied for fourth in the GAC standings with their six wins in 10 games.

Late Wonder Boy Run Upends Hot-Shot Dawgs



Jon Chidester
 Sports Asst. AD

Men's Hoops dropped an offensive battle to Arkansas Tech on Saturday, 82-74. Two days removed from the coldest shooting night of the season, SWOSU responded by shooting a blistering 54% from the field but got one-upped by the Wonder Boys who finished at 57% as a team.

It's the highest shooting percentage an opponent has shot against the Dawgs this season. Tech also knocked down 12-of-23 shots from the three-point line – tied for the most three-point makes a SWOSU opponent has had this season.

A pair of Ben Smith free throws with 5:38 to play had SWOSU leading 72-67 before Tech closed the game on a 15-2 run to earn the win. The Dawgs shot just 1-of-8 down the stretch when an answer to the home team's run was needed.

Arkansas Tech led by as many as 10 points in the first half, but SWOSU answered with a run before halftime to tie things up.

The sides went into the break tied at 37-37.

After halftime, SWOSU led by as many as nine themselves in the early going before ATU's big run late.

Tech was able to force turnovers in the second half after SWOSU committed just one in the first half. After halftime, the Dawgs turned the ball over seven times that got turned into 13 points the other way by the opportunistic Wonder Boys.

Five Bulldogs finished in double figures led by 15 apiece from Mark Berry (7-10) and Ben Smith (4-13). It was almost six, after Mason Hart had a season high nine points on a perfect 3-for-3 shooting from the three-point line.

The loss makes SWOSU's record 5-10 overall and an even 5-5 in league play.

The Bulldogs will host Northwestern to close out the first half of conference play on Thursday, Jan. 25. They'll turn around and welcome Oklahoma Baptist on Saturday.

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